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ABSTRACT

A part of the New York City Board of Education Early Stages educational program, this activity packet was developed to assist teachers in preparing students for viewing the American Ballet Theatre's production of "The Nutcracker." The guide begins with a section on preparing for the performance, and includes information on the Early Stages program, the Lincoln Center Complex, the American Ballet Theatre, getting ready to attend a live performance, and trip preparation for teachers. The second section deals with learning about ballet, and discusses the nature of dance, learning about dance, questions and answers for balletomanes, and ballet language, and includes a ballet dictionary, the story of "The Nutcracker," and a classroom critics' checklist. Curriculum activities for young theatergoers after the performance are presented in the third section of the guide, which contains the following activities: (1) a ballet idea map; (2) critics' circle; (3) guidelines for classroom dance critics; (4) sample reviews; (5) backstage at the ballet; and (6) dance in the media. Appendixes comprise the fourth section of the guide, and they deal with the history of the ballet, resources for teachers and students, and articles from the American Ballet Theatre newsletter, "On Point." (SKC)

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Preview Performances
for New York City Schoolchildren
presented by
The Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting

New York City Board of Education
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Office of Curriculum Development and Support

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Theater Activity Packet

to be used in conjunction with

THE NUTCRACKER

performed by the

American Ballet Theatre

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Foreword

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction is pleased to participate in an innovative educational program, EARLY STAGES. In this project, selected teachers and students in grades four through nine from Community School Districts attend special events in the performing arts.

The accompanying Theater Activity Packet for this performance of The Nutcracker has been developed to assist teachers in preparing students for this special experience and extending their learning in the classroom.

We see this program as a special opportunity for students to listen and observe with greater critical interest and share their observations in all areas of communication arts through the activities provided.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting for enabling our young students in the program to share increasingly in the cultural riches of New York City.

Charlotte Frank

Charlotte Frank
Executive Director
Division of Curriculum and Instruction

New York City public schools should order additional copies of this publication from the Bureau of Supplies.

Other persons and institutions may obtain copies of this publication from the Curriculum Editorial and Production Unit of the Office of Curriculum Development and Support, Room 613, 131 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. See current catalog for price. For information, call (718) 596-4807.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

PATRICIA REED SCOTT
DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF FILM, THEATRE
AND BROADCASTING
254 WEST 54TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019
TELEPHONE: 489-6710

WELCOME TO EARLY STAGES! These special matinees for young people 9 to 13 years old in New York City public schools are produced by the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting in cooperation with the Board of Education.

We know you will be a courteous audience for the talented and generous people who will perform for you.

Over 30,000 youngsters have visited the great stages of Broadway, Lincoln Center, City Center and Radio City Music Hall. They have seen Big River, The Tap Dance Kid, The Wind in the Willows, The Wiz, The News, The Three Musketeers, The Metropolitan Opera's Barber of Seville, The Liberace Show, Dance Theatre of Harlem, American Ballet Theatre and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

At all Early Stages performances generous publishers have provided resource books including Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Wizard of Oz, The Wind in the Willows, Nobody's Family is Going to Change, The Three Musketeers and How to Look at Dance.

We hope you will come back to the theatre for many years to come. Meantime enjoy Early Stages.

Sincerely,

Patricia Reed Scott
Director

Arthur R. Mills
Assistant Director for Theatre

Acknowledgments

The Theatre Activity Packet was designed as a curriculum support in the area of communication arts for teachers and students, to be used in conjunction with the special performance of The Nutcracker. These materials were prepared as a project of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Charlotte Frank, Executive Director, through the office of Curriculum Development and Support, Morris Freedman, Deputy Executive Director.

Steven Tribus, Director of the Communication Arts Unit, organized and supervised the project. Olive Francks was responsible for the design of the Theater Activity Packet series. Tanya Kaufman wrote additional materials to accompany the current performance of The Nutcracker.

Mark Hough, Development Assistant for the American Ballet Theatre, provided suggestions and materials for this publication.

The manuscript was prepared for publication by the Editorial and Production Unit, under the direction of Alaire Mitchell, Assistant Director of Curriculum Research (Acting), and Maureen Maguire, Production Coordinator. Susan Maria Grathwohl was Project Editor. Cover by Kent Beaty, design based on a photograph by Martha Swope.

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Part I

Preparing for the Performance

What Is EARLY STAGES?

The EARLY STAGES program is a joint effort of the Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting, and the Communication Arts Unit. EARLY STAGES took its name from the youngsters who may be seeing their first major live performance and also because the matinees are usually scheduled during the preview period. The goal of the program is to expose students to a variety of theatre experiences so that they will become as familiar with live theatre, dance, opera and concerts as they are with television and movies.

Mayor Edward Koch inaugurated the program in 1983 at a special matinee--for 1100 students--of The Tap Dance Kid prior to its Broadway opening. Since that time, students have attended performances of Dance Theatre of Harlem, American Ballet Theatre, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, and The Metropolitan Opera's Barber of Seville, as well as Broadway's The Wiz, The Three Musketeers, Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The News, and Wind in the Willows, and Celebration.

The Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting raises private funds to cover the minimum expenses for these special performances, and also secures books related to the event for distribution to students. The Communication Arts Unit develops a Theatre Activity Packet, including pre/post performance activities which teachers can utilize to integrate the theatre experience with the communication arts curriculum.

The Office of Pupil Transportation arranges bus transportation for each performance. The coordination of these bus arrangements is a vital component of the success of Early Stages events.

These introductory sections have been designed to assist the teacher in planning pre-performance activities. A review of appropriate theater behavior as well as an introduction to the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center and the American Ballet Theater help to prepare students for the upcoming ballet performance.

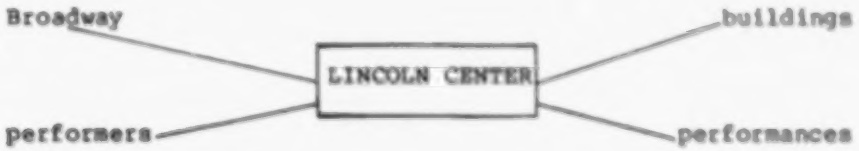
The Lincoln Center Complex

About Lincoln Center

For many students, this may be their first trip to Lincoln Center. As they explore what Lincoln Center has to offer, both before and after the performance, students will come to understand why this landmark is a "world in itself."

Activities

. Elicit from students any information that they already know about Lincoln Center. Responses may be recorded in list form or on a chart, as a whole class brainstorming activity.



. Encourage students to develop a series of questions that they may have about Lincoln Center and the upcoming trip, such as:

- Why is Lincoln Center well known?
  (It is a major cultural arts center for opera, dance and music.)

- Where is Lincoln Center located?
  (Lincoln Center is located on Broadway, from 62nd to 66th streets, on Manhattan's Upper West Side.)

- What are the names of the three major theaters housed at Lincoln Center?
  (The Metropolitan Opera House, The New York State Theatre, Avery Fisher Hall [formerly known as Philharmonic Hall])

- What types of performances are presented at Lincoln Center?
  (operas, ballets, concerts)

. Distribute Worksheet 1, "Map of Lincoln Center," to familiarize students with the complex.

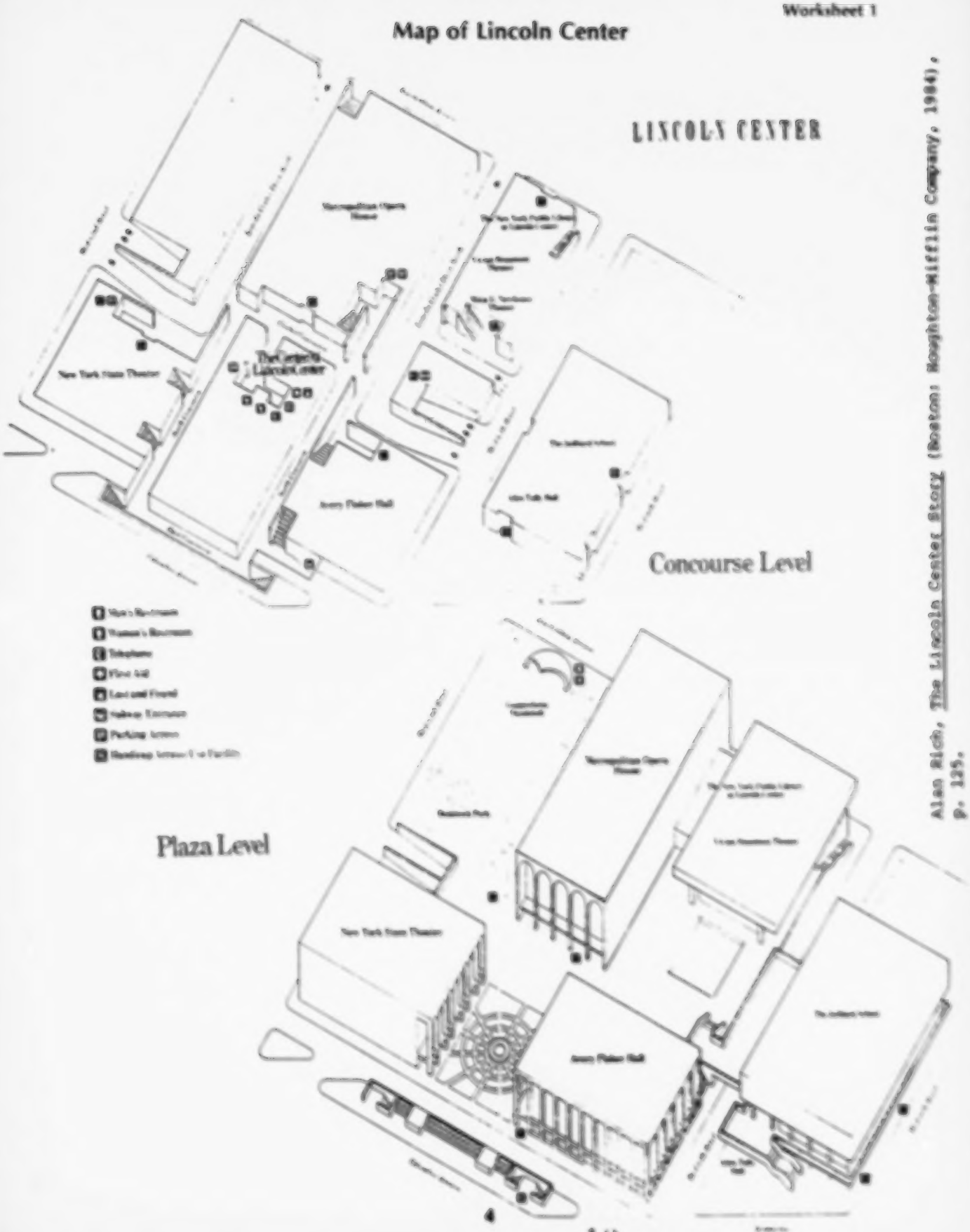
. Point out the main plaza between the New York State Theatre and Avery Fisher Hall (facing Columbus Avenue).

- This is where the famous Lincoln Center fountain is located - one of Manhattan's most famous waterworks and a popular Manhattan meeting place.

- Students may remember that this is where the opening scene of Fame was filmed!

. Students may want to conduct independent research projects about Lincoln Center (its history, buildings, performers) following the performance.

Map of Lincoln Center



Alan Rich, The Lincoln Center Story (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1984), p. 125.

About the Metropolitan Opera House and the American Ballet Theatre

Before the performance, the teacher can highlight points of interest about the Metropolitan Opera House and the American Ballet Theatre so that students will be prepared to appreciate this magnificent building and world-renowned dance company.

. The Opera House or "Met," as it is often called, is one of our nation's greatest cultural assets and an attraction for visitors from around the world. It is the largest building at the Center, with approximately 3,800 seats.

. The opera season runs from September through April, when more than 800,000 people attend performances of twenty-five different operas sung in five languages. When the opera is not performing, the Met presents such international companies as the American Ballet Theatre, the Royal Ballet, Grand Kabuki of Japan and the Finnish National Opera.

. There is an enormous backstage area at the Met. Four revolving stages behind the main stage are used to move sets into place during opera performances. Below stage level, dressing rooms, practice quarters and storage space are all in use. On the floors above the stage level are numerous construction and maintenance shops for carpentry, costume, lighting design, prop, and scenery construction.

STUDENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO NOTICE THE OVERWHELMING BEAUTY OF THIS BUILDING. AS THEY ENTER THE MET, STUDENTS SHOULD BE ADVISED TO LOOK FOR:

. the large, colorful Marc Chagall murals painted for the Met in 1965

. the plush red carpeting thoughout the theater

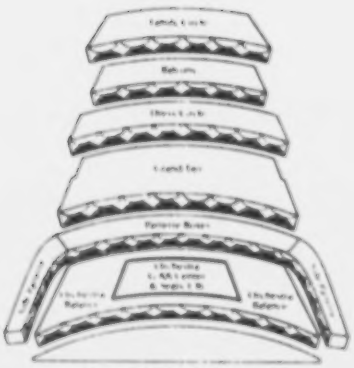
. the star-like chandeliers which rise majestically as the performance is about to begin

. the enormous size of the Met with its many levels, elegant staircases and promenades

. the elegant boxes around the theater which seat members of the audience

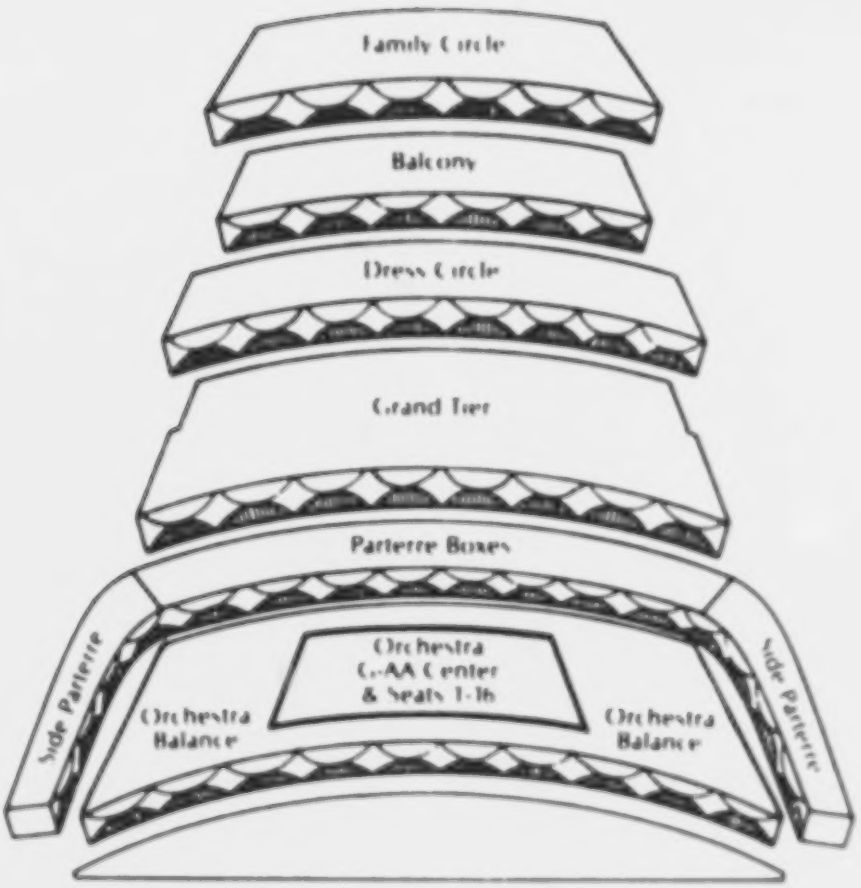
. The Opera House is divided into six main sections:

ORCHESTRA (1st level)	1618 seats
PARTERRE BOXES (2nd level)	200 seats
GRAND TIER (3rd level)	442
DRESS CIRCLE (4th level)	454
BALCONY (5th level)	442
FAMILY CIRCLE (6th level)	633



This diagram is enlarged on Worksheet 2, "Seating Chart: Metropolitan Opera House." The teacher may distribute Worksheet 2 to students during discussion about sections of the opera house.

Seating Chart: Metropolitan Opera House



Metropolitan Opera: Orchestra Seating Chart

Worksheet 3, "Orchestra Seating Chart," follows on the next page. Notice how this section is subdivided to help in locating seats:

ORCHESTRA LEFT (odd numbered seats 1 to 35)

ORCHESTRA RIGHT (even numbered seats 2 to 36)

ORCHESTRA CENTER (seats numbered 101 to 119)

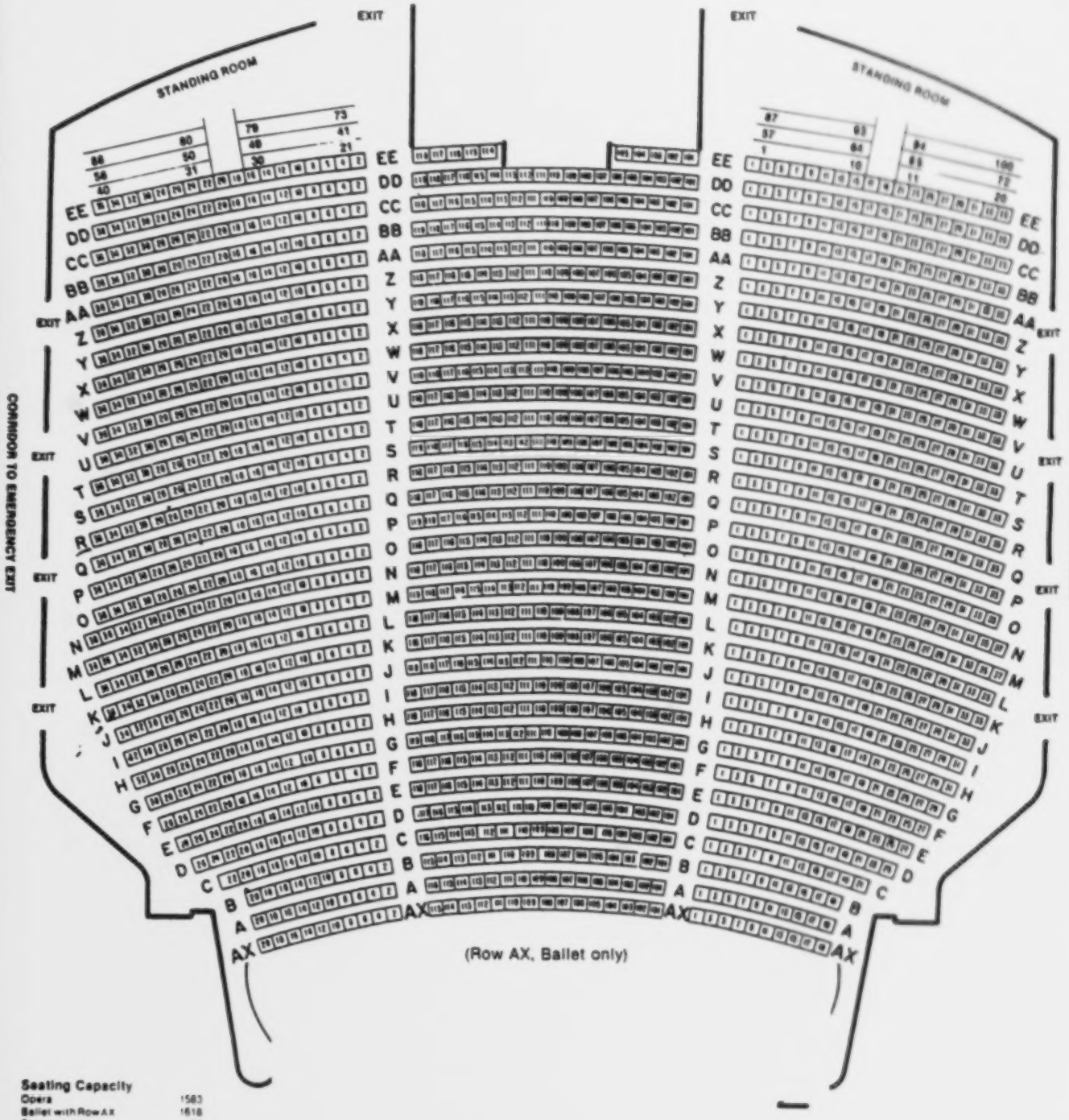
As students review the seating chart, discuss that the theatre is divided into rows, each row has a letter, and each seat is numbered. Each ticket will give your exact seat location.

Students can practice reading a theater ticket and locating seats on the seating chart by completing the activities on Worksheet 4, "How to Read Your Met Theatre Ticket."

Orchestra Seating Chart

Worksheet 3

METROPOLITAN OPERA



Seating Capacity

Opera	1583
Ballet with Row AX	1618
Standing places	100

Rows A & B seats 108-109 and when added Row AX seats 108-109 are marked: Behind Conductor

9 17

How to Read Your Met Theatre Ticket

Your theater ticket will identify your specific seat location. Look at the ticket information on this sample:

Use the information on the ticket to answer these questions:

What is the name of the theater? _____

What is the address? _____

What is the name of the group that is performing? _____

_____

What is the date of the performance? _____

What time does the performance begin? _____

What is the price of the ticket? _____

In which section of the Met is the seat located? _____

What is the row and seat number? _____

Can you find this seat on the ORCHESTRA SEATING CHART? (page 11)

Try to locate the seats listed below on the chart:

ORCHESTRA	AX	17
ORCHESTRA	V	26
ORCHESTRA	AA	11
ORCHESTRA	S	112

Facts About the American Ballet Theatre

The teacher can highlight important points about the ABT with the class in preparation for the performance:

- In the 45 years since American Ballet Theater gave its first performance, it has become one of the major classical ballet companies in the world and America's largest touring dance company.

- Mikhail Baryshnikov, the famous ballet dancer, originally from the Soviet Union, has been the director of the American Ballet Theater since 1980.

- During ABT's 1984-85 Season, it is appearing in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka, Japan, and in Washington, D.C., Boston, Miami Beach, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, and New York City, for a total of 26 weeks of performances.

- ABT brings world-class ballet to audiences in at least nine of the nation's major cities each year, appearing annually before more than a half-million people, and performs before additional millions of viewers on television broadcasts.

- Among the leading American choreographers whose works have been commissioned and/or presented by ABT are Alvin Ailey, George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, Agnes deMille, Eliot Feld, Jose Limon, Eugene Loring, Jerome Robbins, Paul Taylor, Glen Tetley and Twyla Tharp. ABT has also been the American home of the works of leading choreographers from all over the world, past and present.

- ABT's repertoire has always included ballets from the great dance traditions of the world--particularly the Russian, English, Danish, French and American styles. Ballets by virtually every major choreographer of the 19th and 20th centuries are among the 300 works performed since 1940. In any week that it performs, ABT may present a program of three 20th century ballets on one night, followed the next by a three-act classic from the 19th Century. This diversity is the signature of American Ballet Theater; the unique factor that, coupled with the scale of its productions and the widespread sites of its performances, sets it apart from any other company.

- ABT has at one time or other been the home of many of the world's greatest dancers of the past four decades. Today, the vast majority of its dancers hail from cities and towns across America, and as a result of the growing popularity of dance and the improvement of American training and technique, American-born dancers have assumed the majority of principal positions in the Company.

Getting Ready to Attend A Live Performance

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

- Ask students if they have ever attended a theatre performance. Elicit special rules of behavior for the audience to be aware of while in the theatre.

- As students discuss appropriate theatre behavior, establish that audience etiquette, particularly at a theatrical performance, is extremely important, not only to the other members of the audience but to the performers onstage.

- You may develop a chart with the class and/or ask the students to write about their ideas.

POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT DURING THE DISCUSSION:

- Being a member of the audience is a special privilege. Whether at a graduation, special event or theatre performance, appropriate audience behavior is essential. This includes:

  - sitting quietly in the assigned seat.
  - being an attentive and polite listener/viewer.
  - refraining from talking during the event.
  - remaining with the class at all times.
  - remembering to walk slowly when moving from one part of the theatre to another.

- Students and chaperones are asked not to leave their seats except during the intermission. Any student needing to leave the auditorium before the end of an act must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

- Sounds amplify in the theatre and disturb others in the audience and distract the performers. A good thing for an audience to remember for all types of performing arts events is:

  Applause is the big indicator of the way an audience feels about a performance. If you really like a song, a performer, or a special moment, your applause tells this. If people in the audience do not care for something or even dislike something, they simply do not applaud or they applaud very, very softly. This conveys the message clearly.

For the Teacher: Important Trip Information

1. Please check with your district's "Early Stages" coordinator regarding the exact date and time of the performance. Your coordinators name is listed on the attached notice entitled Questions and Answers about Early Stages.

2. A bus confirmation form will be sent directly to your school. If you do not receive the form, or if you have any questions about transportation arrangements, please call Angela Adamo at the Office of Pupil Transportation, (718)784-4707.

3. Inform students that food or drink may not be brought onto the bus or into the theatre.

4. Inform students that quiet conversation is fine, except during the performance. Talking that distracts or interrupts others should be discouraged.

5. Please supervise the group very carefully at all times during the performance.

6. Students who wish to use the lounges must be accompanied by an adult chaperone. One adult should remain with the students who are seated, while the other leads a group to the lounges.

7. At the conclusion of the performance, please ask your group to remain seated until they are called to exit from the theatre.

8. Determine the location of your district bus. There will be supervisors from the Office of Pupil Transportation to assist you.

Part II
Learning About Ballet

Dance Is . . .

Dance is a collection of people listening to a portable stereo and break dancing--in a park, on a street corner, on a stage. It is one hundred men on the island of Bali swaying and shaking through the traditional movements of an old tribal dance.

Dance is a court of nobles and ladies during the reign of Louis XIV of France, dressed in fine robes and powdered wigs, following the graceful steps and turns of a minuet. It is a group of peasants in a tavern, lustily stamping to a folk tune.

Dance is a class of ballet students practicing plies and releves. It is an Apache Indian doing the terrifying Crown Dance to summon forth magical spirits.

Dance is all this and much more. Dance is magic. It is a religious or mystical ritual. It is the means to express powerful emotions, to express deep feelings.

Dance is basic to all people. It is the most widespread and universal of all human activities. Some believe it to be the first art form, from the beginnings of human history. Indeed, almost all people on earth have dance traditions, and in most cases, dance forms differ from place to place.

Dance also differs from time to time. Styles of dance change as people change their ways of life. But, throughout dance history, dance has always sprung from peoples' basic beliefs and activities. When we dance or go to see dance performed, we become one with the human history of dance.

SOURCE: Melvin Berger. The World of the Dance. New York: S. G. Phillips, 1978. pp. 11-17.

Learning About Dance

This section includes suggested activities for introducing students to dance (dance idea map, specialized dance vocabulary, history of modern dance, questions and answers about the dance). The teacher may use these materials in a variety of ways (large/small group lessons, oral reports, individual research projects), depending on the interests and abilities of the students. A Classroom Critic's Checklist is included to highlight key items students should focus on during the performance.

An Introductory Lesson: The Dance Idea Map

Objective:

To determine what students may already know about dance (prior knowledge) and extend this knowledge through class discussion and further research.

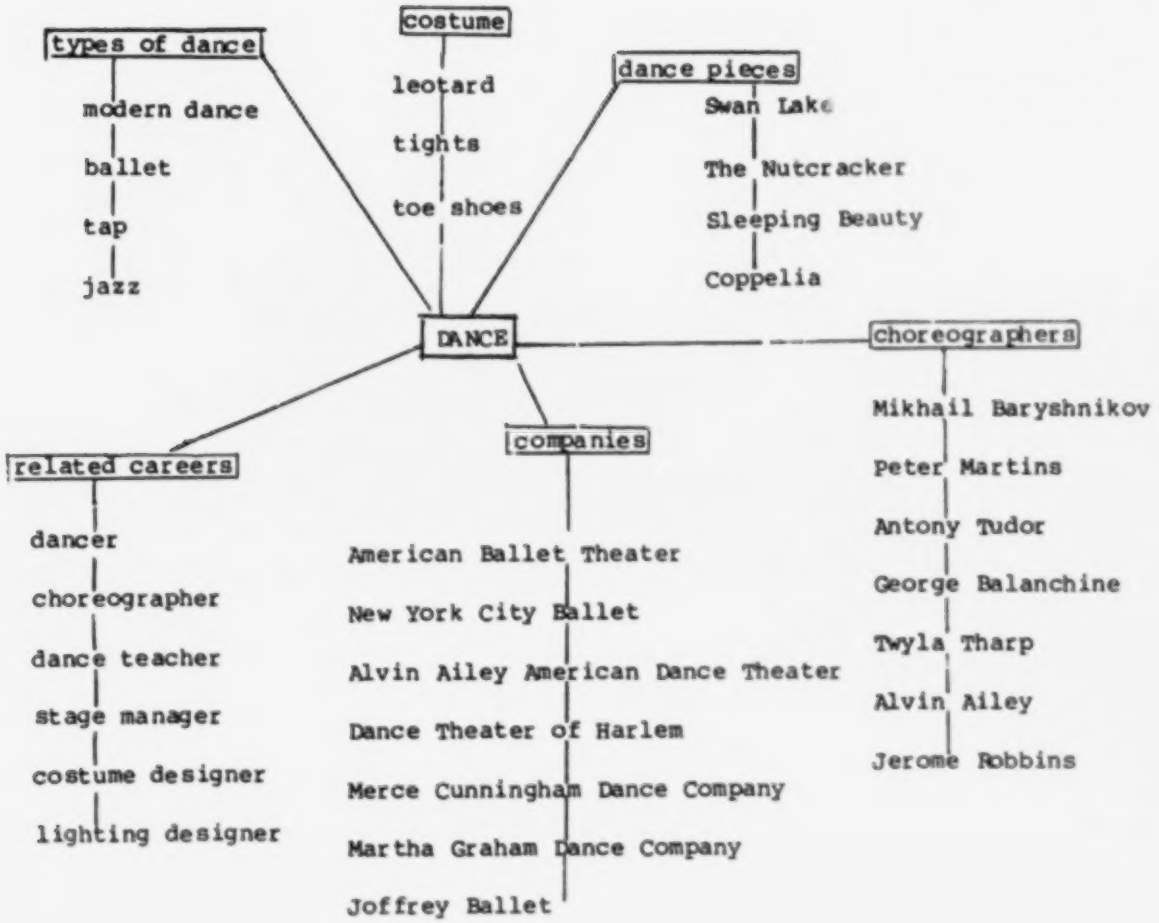
Activities:

Knowledge of dance will vary from student to student. In order to determine how much information students already have the teacher can develop a Dance Idea Map with the class:

- brainstorm with students what comes to their minds when they hear the word dance. To begin this recollection, ask students to share thoughts, ideas and feelings in any order, as they think of them.
- write their responses on the chalkboard or on a large chart (see example below).
- continue to build the Dance Idea Map until all initial contributions are made.

Once students have an understanding of how to develop the Dance Idea Map, ask them to construct their own versions. They can add to the information from the class chart as they work.

A sample Dance Idea Map is reproduced on the next page.



. Ask students to share their work. Review the Dance Maps with the class and encourage students to identify major areas of interest. Students may want to learn more about specific topics by reading and/or conducting individual research projects. (Visits to school and local libraries as well as the Library of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center will assist students with their research.)

. Ask students to save their individual Dance Maps. They will be asked to add new information after the performance, in order to compare their knowledge about dance "before" and "after."

Questions and Answers for Balletomanes

Teachers and students can use this series of Questions and Answers about dance in a variety of ways:

Individual Research - Students can select questions of interest, research the answers, prepare a written or oral report for the class.

Small Group Work - Students can explore the answers to questions during group work and present their findings to the class.

Interviewing - Students can interview peers, teachers, relatives, etc., to find the answers and present the results in a written or oral report. If teachers/students know anyone who is a dancer, or who attends dance performances frequently, these individuals can be called upon as resources.

Although several Questions and Answers are presented here, teachers are encouraged to develop a series of additional questions about the dance with their classes. A list of these student generated questions can be displayed in the classroom and used as the basis for a unit on the dance.

Here are a few questions and answers to start with:

QUESTION: What is ballet?

ANSWER: Ballet is a dance form which has been in existence since the fifteenth century. Based on this long tradition, a ballet can be said to include music, dancing, scenery, and costumes. Some ballets tell a story, like The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker. In these, the dancers tell the story without using any words. They do this by mime and gestures, and by the way they use their bodies, as in "body talk."

Some ballets do not have any story. In these ballets, the dancers may move through the music, forming beautiful designs. Or, they may express the music abstractly, so that the audience sees and feels the music and dance as one. In these, the dance is plotless and depends upon the beauty of the dancers as they move through the space on the stage. Examples of this are ballets by George Balanchine such as Agon (choreographed in 1957) as well as plotless ballets by Arthur Mitchell such as Holberg Suite, Rhythmetron, and Fete Noire.

QUESTION: How does someone become a ballet dancer?

ANSWER: Dancers begin to learn their art by taking ballet lessons with a ballet teacher, as in a school such as the School of American Ballet. A dancer studies by practicing every day, just as one learns a sport.

QUESTION: How old should you be to begin ballet classes (lessons)?

ANSWER: You should start when you are 8 or 9 years old, in general, although some begin earlier and others start later on. In this way, your teacher can help you to use your body correctly and can train your muscles carefully to do the special work of ballet.

QUESTION: How long does it take to become a ballet dancer?

ANSWER: In general, a dancer needs 8 to 10 years of training. To start with, a ballet student goes to ballet school once or twice a week. When the student is 11 or 12 years old, he or she usually takes class every day, Monday through Friday or Saturday. When students are about 15 years old, they begin to take 10 to 15 lessons each week, spending almost all their time in taking classes and practicing.

Ballet students who are seriously thinking about a ballet career, go to ballet school until they are 17 or 18 years old, then, if they are good enough, they begin their careers as ballet dancers.

QUESTION: Are there special clothes to wear for ballet lessons?

ANSWER: Boys and men wear tights and a tee shirt, plus their ballet slippers. Girls and women wear tights and leotards, and occasionally a very short miniskirt called a tutu is worn over the leotard. Girls and women can wear two kinds of ballet shoes: soft ballet slippers, and later on, toe shoes for standing on pointe (on the tips of the toes). It takes time to grow into dancing on pointe. It is not for the beginners. (NOTE: See article in Appendix C, entitled "If The Shoe Fits.")

QUESTION: Why does it take a long period of time to become a ballet dancer?

ANSWER: Ballet dancing may look easy and effortless when you watch a well-trained dancer, but that is because the dancer has perfected each move, each step, each spin, leap or position. Then too, because ballet is an art form, rather than a sport, each dancer must also learn to express and interpret a role or an idea so that the audience can see it visually, understand it and believe it. Each artist must learn to express a part in his or her own individual way, yet do this as the choreographer has directed.

QUESTION: What do you learn in your first ballet lessons?

ANSWER: You learn how to stand and hold yourself like a ballet dancer. Ballet dancers must be able to stand with their feet and knees pointing to the side. This is called a "turnout." Ordinarily, we stand and walk with our feet and knees pointing straight ahead. It takes time, practice, and constant reminders to change the way we stand and walk to the ballet dancer's turnout position.

QUESTION: Once he or she has learned all the steps, can the ballet dancer do any steps he or she wishes to do in a ballet?

ANSWER: No, not unless the dancer is the choreographer. It is the choreographer who designs or creates a ballet, putting together particular steps and movements. The choreographer blocks the ballet by working with one dancer or several dancers. In this way, the dancers learn the ballet directly by working with the choreographer.

QUESTION: What does a professional dancer do all day?

ANSWER: A dancer practices all morning and afternoon. The professional dancer takes class for several hours, too. This means that a ballet dancer can spend almost the entire day practicing and improving his or her dancing, just as professional athletes practice continuously to keep in shape.

"No matter how good you are," a famous dancer said, "you always need teaching."[1]

QUESTION: What is a ballet star called?

ANSWER: A girl or a woman who is one of the very best dancers in a ballet company is called a ballerina. A boy or a man who is a ballet star is called a premier danseur which, in English means "first dancer."

QUESTION: How long is a professional ballet dancer's career?

ANSWER: Most dancers stop dancing professionally when they are 35 to 40 years old, about the same age that professional athletes retire. There are exceptions to this, of course, such as Rudolf Nureyev and Alicia Alonso, who are still dancing today. Generally speaking, a ballet dancer's career is short, filled with endless practicing, dancing, studying, and it's likely to be marred by accidents while dancing (they pull their muscles, sprain their ankles, break small bones in their feet).

QUESTION: What can a dancer do when he or she stops dancing as a career?

ANSWER: Some dancers teach other dancers. An example of this is Alexandra Danilova, a former ballerina and great star, who today teaches and coaches ballet stars.

Other dancers run ballet companies, while still others become writers or photographers or go into brand new careers.

QUESTION: If ballet dancers have to retire early, and if they work so hard, and get hurt sometimes, why do they dance?

ANSWER: Ballet dancers dance because they love dancing so much that without it, life would have little meaning for them. They are willing to do all these things, even dance while in pain, because they sincerely love what they are doing.

QUESTION: How is a story turned into a ballet?

ANSWER: The choreographer plans, composes, and directs the ballet after studying the music and/or story upon which the dance is based.

Creating a ballet requires an understanding of how to combine movement, rhythm, design, and music into a powerful form of self-expression. As the choreographer hears the music, he/she composes movements and patterns into dance sequences to accompany the selection. The choreographer is a creator, an "architect" of the dance, inspired by images from the music and/or story, and the marvels of movement captured in dance.

1. Ruth Belov Gross, If You Were a Ballet Dancer (New York: Dial, 1979), p. 33.

The choreographer communicates his or her interpretation to the dancers through a specialized "ballet language" which is universally understood (see section entitled "A Ballet Dictionary.")

The arrangement of dance movements and patterns is a long-term process which requires many revisions before the ballet is completed.

QUESTION: Which comes first...story or music?

ANSWER: The answer differs, depending upon the ballet. Some ballets were choreographed directly from a musical composition (The Nutcracker) while others are created to accompany a story that has already been developed (Coppelia, Romeo and Juliet, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella).

Not all ballets tell a story. Many of these non-narrative selections suggest a mood and extend music into abstract or patterned interpretations without following a specific plot or story line (Les Sylphides, a romantic 19th century Chopin ballet).

QUESTION: How does the ballet get on the stage?

ANSWER: Creating and producing a ballet is a cooperative effort. Many individuals are involved in coordinating all necessary elements of the production.

The set/costume/lighting designers as well as stagehands, electricians, make-up artists, etc., all play an important part in helping the show to go on. These individuals all work together in planning sessions and rehearsals to coordinate their efforts so that the performance runs smoothly.

> As students complete the Classroom Critics's Checklist, the teacher may highlight the importance of these key personnel.

Additional questions may be identified and explored by students as they develop their knowledge of the dance:

. When did ballet begin?

. Who are the most famous ballet dancers (past and present)?

. What are some of the most famous ballets?

. Who are the people that influenced ballet over the years? (choreographers, composers, etc.) Why was their influence important?

(See Appendix A, "A Short History of the Ballet," for additional information.)

Students can develop a Time Line about the history of ballet after they have obtained enough information.

Ballet Language: How to "Talk" in Ballet

A ballet dancer could go anywhere in the world and take a ballet class. He/she would understand the teacher because ballet words are universal, that is, they are the same everywhere.

Ballet is "spoken" mainly in French because ballet began 300 years ago in France. The ballet masters developed the terms we use today, and ever since the seventeenth century ballet dancers have been using the same special ballet words.

In familiarizing students with the "language of ballet," the teacher can introduce/reinforce specialized vocabulary in a variety of ways:

- Students can be asked to locate "ballet words" in their readings. Words can be listed on the chalkboard or on a chart.

- The class can brainstorm (in small groups) to define the words. More difficult words can be looked up, either in the dictionary or in a resource book on the dance (see Appendix for listings).

- Specific assignments related to the specialized vocabulary might include the following activities:

  a) word studies - for example:
  In dance, <u>arabesque</u> refers to a ballet pose. What is an <u>arabesque</u> in architectural design? What are other origins of this word? Look it up in an unabridged dictionary. What other "dance words" have multiple meanings?

  b) Students can develop a section on "dance language" in their vocabulary or spelling notebooks. These words can be incorporated into daily language arts lessons.

  c) Students can demonstrate specific dance steps to increase their understanding of this specialized vocabulary.

  d) Students can choreograph a ballet and present it to the class, illustrating specific dance steps during the performance (e.g., grand jête, pas de chat, pas de deux, plié).

A Ballet Dictionary

arabesque (ah-ra-besk)
A ballet pose. In an arabesque, the dancer stands on one leg and stretches the other straight in back. There are different variations of an arabesque, too.

attitude (ah-tee-tiud)
A term which comes from the Italian word attitudine, meaning "a way of holding the body." There are numerous variations of this pose, which is basically a vertical position of the body supported by one leg, with the other, knee bent, raised behind, and the arms raised high.

ballerina (bahl-uh-ree-nah)
A ballet star. Ballerinas are the very best female dancers in a ballet company.

barre (bahr)
The wooden bar that is fastened to the wall of a dance studio. Dancers hold on to the bar for some of their exercises. It helps them keep their balance. Every ballet class begins at the barre.

choreographe (kor-eh-grahf)
The French word for choreographer (derived from the Greek word choreia, dance and graphas, writer). One who composes dances and ballets.

corps de ballet (core duh ba-lay)
The dancers in a ballet company who dance together in a group. They are somewhat like the singers in a chorus.

danseur, premier (prehm-yay dahn-suhr)
The first male dancer. A principal male dancer in a ballet company.

danseuse, premiere (prehm-yair dahn-suhz)
The first female dancer. A principal female dancer in a ballet company.

elevation (ay-lay-vah-syon)
Literally means elevation. A term used to indicate the height of the jump attained by the dancer.

grand jete (grahn zhuh-tay)
A big leap in the air.

leotard (lee-oh-tard)
A tightly fitting one-piece garment covering the body from neck to thighs or to the ankles, it is worn for ballet practice and on the stage.

A BALLET DICTIONARY - continued

pas (pah)
A step in ballet.

pas de chat (pah de shah)
A cat step. Chat means cat in French, and the step is called this because it looks like the way a cat might jump.

pas de deux (pah duh duh)
A dance for two people. A dance for three people is called a pas de trois (pah duh twah). Trois means three in French.

pirouette (peer-oo-wet)
A turn in which the dancer spins around on one foot. A dancer needs excellent balance to do one pirouette after another.

plie (plee-ay)
A special kind of knee bend that dancers do. They do a plie at the beginning and end of every jump.

pointes (pwant)
The tips of the toes. When a dancer dances on the tips of her toes, we say that she is dancing on pointe. A dancer wears special toe shoes to dance this way.

reverence (ray-vay-rahnce)
A deep bow, the kind dancers make to the audience at the end of a ballet. In many ballet schools, the students end each class with a reverance for their teacher. It is a gesture of respect and gratitude.

tour en l'air (toor-ahn-lair)
Also called air turn - a complete turn that a dancer makes in the air.

tutu (too-too)
The fluffy skirt that is worn in many ballets by female dancers. Some tutus are short, and some are long.

SOURCES:

Ruth Belov Gross. If You Were a Ballet Dancer. New York: Dial Press, 1979, pp. 46-47.

Thalia Mara. The Language of Ballet. An Informal Dictionary. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1966, pp. 9, 10, 33, 39, 71.

The Story of *The Nutcracker*

Background information:

The Nutcracker
(A ballet in two acts)
Music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Production conceived, directed and choreographed by
Mikhail Baryshnikov
Choreography for "Waltz of the Snowflakes" by Vasily Vainonen
Scenery by Boris Aronson
Costumes by Frank Thompson
Lighting by Jennifer Tipton

In 1891 the great Russian composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was commissioned to write The Nutcracker as part of a double bill for the Maryinsky Theatre. The composer of two other famous full length ballets, Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake, Tchaikovsky based the ballet on the tale of "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" as adapted by Alexandre Dumas from the original by E.T.A. Hoffman. Marius Petipa drafted the scenario, but was taken ill, and the ballet was eventually choreographed by his assistant, Lev Ivanov.

The ballet was finally produced in 1892, but little of the original choreography survives today. However, because of the popularity of the score and the suitability of the subject for holiday entertainment, many other choreographers have made their own versions of the ballet. Mikhail Baryshnikov premiered his version with The American Ballet Theatre on December 21, 1976 in Washington DC. Since then it has become an annual holiday favorite for children and adults alike, seen both on television and the live stage.

Story Synopsis:

PROLOGUE

It is Christmas Eve and Drosselmeyer is preparing his gifts and magic dolls for the annual holiday party at the home of his godchild, Clara Stahlbaum.

ACT I

Scene I. The Stahlbaum household is preparing for the Christmas festivities. Suddenly, Drosselmeyer appears to surprise everyone with his magic tricks which begin with a puppet show. The puppets act out the fairy tale of the lovely Princess and her two suitors, the handsome prince and the wicked Mouse King. To everyone's delight the Prince is victorious. Then Drosselmeyer produces three magic life-size dolls and his special present for his godchild Clara, the Nutcracker doll. Nobody except Clara loves this strange toy, and she begs Drosselmeyer to make him life-size like he did with the others. A tipsy guest accidentally breaks Clara's beloved toy and Clara binds his broken jaw with her handkerchief. As the guests finally depart, Clara asks to be allowed to sleep with her doll, but her father tells her to leave it beneath the Christmas tree.

Scene II. It is the middle of the night. Clara steals down to see her Nutcracker and is frightened by the bat-like shadow of Drosselmeyer who is still there in hiding. Suddenly she sees some odd creatures around the tree. They seem to be like the guests at her parents' Christmas party who have turned into giant mice, the subjects of the Mouse King. She confronts them bravely. Suddenly Drosselmeyer causes the Christmas tree to grow to an immense height and then, before her very eyes, the Nutcracker doll grows to life size and begins to move. The Nutcracker is immediately pitched into battle with the Mouse King and his army. Another army of toy soldiers appears, who also remind Clara of her little friends from the evening's festivities, and the battle is on. Clara saves the day by hurling her candle at the Mouse King. He is distracted and the Nutcracker defeats him. Drosselmeyer appears as if to remind Clara, "You wanted him to grow up. Look, I am going to give you what you begged for (what you wanted) as a reward for your kindness and love for the Nutcracker." Drosselmeyer transforms the Nutcracker into the handsome young Prince who beckons Clara to follow him to a land of magical dreams. Once again, Drosselmeyer waves his hands and the beautiful Christmas forest appears. The dancing Snowflakes guide the Prince and Clara to the Prince's castle.

Intermission

ACT II

The Prince leads Clara to his kingdom. They are met at the gates by his subjects. The Prince tells them the story of his fight and victory over the Mouse King. Soon they enter the Prince's Court which is filled with beautiful puppets that spring to life at the Prince's touch and dance in honor of him and Clara. The Prince and Clara join in when the entire court dances the Rose Waltz. Suddenly a strange atmosphere descends over the festive hall. Everything begins to disappear, as if an invisible hand were destroying all this illusion. Clara is confused and even more so when Drosselmeyer appears and tells Clara that this "dream" is over and she must return to her home. Clara does everything not to lose her wonderful Prince and his magic kingdom. She and the Prince resist Drosselmeyer's attempt to withdraw Clara from her dream. Victorious, the beautiful couple dances, but as the glorious procession of subjects leaves, Clara is unaware that she has to wake up anyway. Little by little her dream world fades away and she finds herself in the streaming sunlight of early morning.

To the Teacher

Worksheet 5, "The Classroom Critics' Checklist," was designed to help students focus on specific items before, during and after the performance. The teacher can review the checklist with students, highlighting things to look for as they view the ballet. Students should be encouraged to incorporate additional items that may be appropriate.

If possible, duplicate copies of Worksheet 5 for each student. This will enable pupils to keep an individual record of their responses following the performance, in preparation for writing their own review of The Nutcracker. (See page 35, "Critics' Circle")

Worksheet 5

Classroom Critics' Checklist

A ballet critic is an expert in ballet and is also a journalist. In order to evaluate a ballet, you should be aware of what to look for during the performance. So, at the performance you are going to attend, you will want to observe carefully the following items and add to this by your own experience.

Here are some items for classroom critics to consider before and after the performance:

Storyline

_____ Yes, there was a definite storyline.
_____ No, none existed.
_____ Other _____.

Series of acts

_____ There were three acts in this ballet.
_____ There were two acts in this ballet.
_____ There was only one act.
_____ Other _____.

Number of scenes, if any, per act

_____ In Act I.
_____ In Act II.
_____ In Act III.

Setting (time and location of different scenes)

. If all the action took place in one place and time, tell where and when.

_____

. If there were different settings, name them:

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5 (continued)

Sets (scenery and props)

_____ Sets were realistic (for example, real furniture was used).
_____ Imaginative sets were used to set a mood.
_____ There was no use of sets.

. What different types of sets were used?
. How did the sets contribute to the action and plot?

_____

_____

_____

Lighting

. How was the lighting used? Did the lighting change frequently? When did it change? Did it change when the scene changed? How did the lighting (or lack of it - darkness) affect the action and plot? Did you enjoy the ballet more or less because of the lighting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Costumes

. What made the costumes special or unusual? Or, how were they very traditional?

_____

_____

. How were the following used?

color _____

texture _____

style _____

different materials _____

. Which character or characters came to your attention most vividly because of costuming?

_____

_____

Music

. How was music used with the ballet?
. Did the music highlight the story line? Did it highlight the characterizations? How, or why not?

_____

_____

. How did the tempo of the music and sound quality (loud music/soft music) affect the dancing?

_____

Choreography

. What types of dancing did you see? Were there solo dances? Was there group choreography? What other kinds of dance numbers were there?

_____

_____

_____

. Did you recognize specific dance steps? Which ones?

_____

_____

Characterization

. How did the principal dancers develop their roles? What actions, gestures, movements made their characters memorable?

_____

_____

Before you go to the performance develop your own class or individual Critics' Checklist to help you to focus your attention and observe more carefully.

After the performance study your Critics' Checklist and ask yourself (and your classmates) a few additional questions:

. What was most impressive about The Nutcracker? What were some special features that made this ballet really stand out?

. What was interesting (to the critic and to others in the audience) about this particular ballet? Can you compare it to any other ballet you've seen on stage or elsewhere?

Part III

After the Performance —
Curriculum Activities for Young Theatregoers

These activities have been designed for use after students have seen the performance of The Nutcracker. Some activities are a follow-up to those introduced in Part II, and require a review of materials used earlier (the Dance Idea map and Classroom Critics' Checklist).

Teachers are encouraged to supplement these post-performance suggestions with additional ideas and activities to help students extend the ballet experience into the classroom.

Dance Idea Map

- Ask students to review their individual Dance Idea Maps developed during the Introductory Lesson before the performance.
- Encourage students to add new information to their maps now that they have seen the performance and learned more about ballet.
- Students can continue to research major areas of interest. Written/oral reports, art work, group projects and a class newsletter about ballet can serve to culminate research activities.
- Set up a display or bulletin board in the classroom after students have researched the dance fully. To make your class display come alive, include dance programs, playbills, dance photos, newspaper/magazine articles about the dance, etc.

Critic's Circle

- To prepare students for writing their own review of The Nutcracker, ask them to read published reviews of recent dance performances written in newspapers and magazines. Ask students to cut out reviews that are of interest and bring them to class.
- The teacher can duplicate and distribute the sample reviews included here, to discuss with students, noting the style that the critic uses as well as the content.
- As the teacher and students analyze newspaper reviews about dance, guidelines for writing a dance review should be developed. Before students begin to write their own review, they should:
  - be familiar with the format of a review and specific items to include (name of theater, performance, performers, directors, etc.).
  - reread their responses to the Classroom Critics Checklist (pages 34-34) and determine how this information can be included in their reviews.

Duplicate copies of Worksheet 6, "Guidelines for Classroom Dance Critics." The suggestions listed on the worksheet can help students organize and write their review of The Nutcracker.

Guidelines for Classroom Dance Critics

You are the dance critic for a major newspaper. Your job is to go to dance performances and review them for the public. You have your own column and byline.

You have been asked to write a review of The Nutcracker by the American Ballet Theater. Include in your review:

- the name of the theater
- the names of the choreographers, principal dancers, orchestra leader, and other persons involved with the performance
- the date you attended
- what you think about this performance

. To prepare your review, make sure to go over your responses to the questions on the Classroom Critic's Checklist. Decide how you wish to organize the material, sketch out your review, and begin writing.

. After you have written a first draft, read the review to yourself, and then to a classmate or teacher. Decide if there is anything that you wish to change and begin to write a second draft. After you have revised the review and it is ready for publication, print or type it below in the form of a newspaper column as shown in the sample reviews.

Title of your column:

_____

The Nutcracker
The American Ballet Theater

By _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

. Another way to write a review of a dance performance is to plan it as though it would be used on a radio or TV show. To do this, you will need to develop your own format and style. Listen to or watch one or more programs that feature dance reviews or dance programs.

. Prepare your review of The Nutcracker. Then tape it or recite it in your classroom or over the school P.A. system, if you are invited to do so.

- What will you tell your audience about this performance?
- How can you (visually or through sound) make your report interesting enough to capture people's interest?
- Will you give the performance a rating (such as calling it a 10-star show)?

. A variation of this idea is to tape a few of your classmates' opinions, in a person-to-person technique as though they had just left the theater. If you have no tape recorder, then write down what they have to say, in their words.

BALLET:
'NUTCRACKER' BRILLIANT
WITH OR WITHOUT
BARYSHNIKOV

By Anne Marie Welsh
Special to
The Washington Star

Thursday, December 23, 1976 The Washington Star B-3

If there were any worries at American Ballet Theatre that Mikhail Baryshnikov's new production of "The Nutcracker" might fade without his dancing, they were dispelled by yesterday's matinee. Three company principals made their debuts in the work's major roles; they danced a less mysterious though more elegant vision than on opening night. This second performance also smoothed away the few technical difficulties that remained.

Florence Clerc brought confident, lyrical dancing and an elegant style to her company debut in the role of Clara. Clerc has just come to ABT from the Paris Opera where she was prima ballerina. Her variation to Tchaikovsky's sugar plum music was full of delicacy and precision and within the limitations of this role, she showed great dramatic promise.

Clark Tippet played her nutcracker-turned-prince with a warmth and openness that are making him one of the most engaging young dancers in the company. His joy seemed to inspire Clara to move away from her world and through the snow forest with him. His re-enactment of Clara's heroism was full of gratitude and his partnering in the second act pas de trois was compassionate. Though he is not yet a great classical technician, he is wise enough never to push beyond his limits. His dancing remains precise and pleasing. Tippet is fine in Baryshnikov's role.

Gayle Young shared much of Tippet's warmth in his portrayal of Drosselmeyer, the godfather who gives Clara her nutcracker and her dream. There were few undercurrents in Young's portrayal but all his story telling through mime was clear and his protective love for Clara was never in doubt.

Several of Baryshnikov's inventions were clearer still in this viewing - the stuffiness of the party from which Clara dreams of escape, the rightness of the court buffoons who wear their emotions on their clownish faces, and most importantly, the fluid and symphonic effects of his choreography.

The performance was mobbed with children and their responses suggested that this new "Nutcracker" is still vibrating sympathetically with the imaginations of children at Christmas.

Sample Reviews (continued)

ABT'S 'NUTCRACKER' -
GOODS WITHOUT THE GOO

Ruth Gilbert
New York Magazine
1/17/77

Bad 'Nutcracker' news in New York this winter, where Balanchine's City Ballet version was struck, stricken, or what have you after a scant half-dozen performances. Good 'Nutcracker' news in Washington, however, where the American Ballet Theater unveiled its new Mikhail Baryshnikov version a few days before Christmas. New York will have to wait for this one; the ABT can't bring it into City Center during its stand this month 'cause the stage is too small. It's bound to look good at the Met next April, however. The production is a triumph - for the ABT, and for Baryshnikov, who now joins his fellow Kirov refugee Nureyev, not only as a supreme dancer, but also as a supreme choreographer and restorer of Russian classical ballet.

The 'Nutcracker' takes on new dimensions in Baryshnikov's rephrasing of the E.T.A. Hoffmann tale. A love story evolves in the dreams of Clara, a nubile girl-child, and she tastes the joys of love in her prince's kingdom in a ballroom peopled by rosy waltzing couples and familiar toys raised to the level of old friends. Not for her the frappes, three-storied ice cream cakes, and sweetmeats (idealized for her in "Confituerenburg" in the Balanchine version), but <u>love</u> - in all its infinite varieties. There is a rhapsodic love duet at the end of the first scene, danced ravishingly and youthfully by Baryshnikov and Marianna Tcherkassky (as Clara) with exquisite high lifts and embraces. A pas de trois occurs in the last act, with Clara torn between the Drosselmeier of her real life (a sinister Humbert Humbert character) and the young prince of her dreams. She will suffer in the awakening, and it is tragic, but at least there's hope for Clara because we know what her heart is capable of.

Best of all in this 'Nutcracker,' aside from the absence of real children performing - Balanchine's gimmick, one which only gladdens the hearts of mothers - is the dancing. There is more pure exciting ballet for the whole cast than in two ordinary 'Nutcrackers.' (On opening night, however, in the snowflake scene, which Baryshnikov restored intact from the Vasily Vainonen version, the choral-music tape started too late, and the snowflakes were hurled into a most difficult composition, were forced to count, were thrown off beat, and it was merely luck that only one poor flake fell on her backside before the scene was over and the long line of white-clad girls limped offstage. At the matinee the next day, all went well and the magnificently designed sequence was flawless.) The scene is evolved in circles; flakes leap from the center, leap back to the hub; circles form and reform, wheels within wheels. Snowflakes go every which way as the tempo quickens, and the dancers are strong, swift, and confident.

Marianna Tcherkassky, in Clara's solo, had style and feeling, at once womanly and childish, and showed her

Sample Reviews (continued)

potential as an actress as well as a dancer. She seemed elfin, merry, passionate, or despairing, but always there was the delightful flow of grace. (The next day, Clark Tippet was the Prince with the French ballerina Florence Clerc as Clara. He is fast becoming an expert technician, his sole fault, a distracting one, being a tendency to play too much to the audience.)

The mice in the first act are dainty, dressed in tights and frock suits like diplomats; their masks are witty and they have big pink ears. They strut up and down with their hands clasped under their coattails like thoughtful little lawyers and their skirmish with the soldiers is charming. The Mouse King is a more sympathetic figure than Balanchine's (who dresses his mice in Beatrix Potter-looking costumes which hide the line of the dance).

There are splendid divertissements at the court of the Young Prince. Warren Conover, a brilliant dancer who never seems to be used to full advantage, has a splendid virtuoso role as a shepherd, with a fine opportunity to display his exemplary technique and extraordinary elevation. George de la Pena and Roman Jasinsky are exuberant in a Russian peasant number. Jolinda Menendez and Frank Smith are stunning in a Spanish dance. Boris Aronson's elegant, complex sets are, the Ballroom Scene perhaps excepted, as gorgeous as the dancing.

Backstage at the Ballet

An exploration of ballet-related jobs can help students develop career awareness and appreciate how individuals must work together to make the show go on.

ACTIVITIES

. Ask students to list all of the backstage jobs connected to the performance of "The Nutcracker." These may include:

stage hand	electrician
costume designer	choreographer
hair stylist	set designer
make-up artist	carpenter
lighting designer	physical therapist
wardrobe supervisor/dresser	masseuse
box office attendent	usher
public relations staff	wardrobe mistress
	wardrobe master

. Discuss students' ideas of what these jobs entail and why they are necessary.
. Students can select specific jobs that interest them and try to learn more about these fields by...

- visiting a small local theater company or neighborhood High School that has a performing arts department.
- looking through Variety or Backstage for information about careers in the performing arts.
- identifying theater groups, individuals working in the performing arts, or schools that train people for these jobs to speak to the class.
- going on a backstage tour (e.g. the "Backstage at the Met" tour available through Lincoln Center).
- Visiting the career section of a local library to research traditional and non-traditional careers in the performing arts.

. **Ask students to read and discuss the articles in Appendix C ("ABT's Costume Jewels," "On Stage Please!" and "A Healthy Role With ABT") which highlight specific backstage careers.**

Dance in the Media

These activities can be utilized to make students aware of the influence of dance in the media.

. Ask students to look in the newspaper and in TV Guide or in similar sources for listings of programs that feature dance. These may include live performances, films, TV programs, etc.

. Make a list of all the performing arts listings which students can find.

EXAMPLES:

Live performances (telecast)

Dance in America series

Programs that feature dance on TV

Saturday Night Live
MTV
Fame
Dance Fever
Live from Lincoln Center

Films (old and new)

The Turning Point
Beat Street
Flashdance
That's Dancing
The Red Shoes
That's Entertainment
any films starring Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, or Gene Kelly

Additional Student Activities

. Review one of these programs or films.
. Sing a song from one of these films or programs, or write down the lyrics in poem form.
. Do a photo montage, cut and paste newspaper or magazine pictures to show what the program is about, or to express your feelings and opinions about it.
. Collect the names of dancers (current or from the past) and persons connected with dance. See how many persons you can list without looking them up in a book, magazine, or newspaper.

Appendices

Appendix A

A Short History of Ballet

Ballet Beginnings

1500's

Although the art of ballet had its early beginnings in the courts of Italian noblemen, it found its first real home in France in the sixteenth century. A French ballet master was the first to codify ballet technique and to set down the basic rules and principles of classical ballet. French is, therefore, the universal language of ballet, even today.

1600's

By the year 1640, theaters were being built with a raised platform stage. The stage was framed by an arch, called a proscenium. This allowed for special lighting and stage effects. Of particular interest to dance was the device which helped dancers to "fly" up into the air by systems of hidden wires. At this point, ballet moved out of the court ballrooms and into the stages of these new theaters.

1700's

Camargo (1710-1770)

Noverre (1727-1810)

Still more changes were to come. In the eighteenth century, a famous ballerina named Marie Camargo changed the ballerina's costume from the long, heavy court costume to a shorter skirt. She also established the 90-degree turnout of the legs as a requirement of ballet dancing. In the same period of time, the choreographer Jean Georges Noverre began to create ballets which were artistic, in which the gestures and movements of the dancers had to fit the character. He put an end to the use of masks. In many other ways, Noverre changed the style of ballet. Many dance scholars believe that nineteenth century ballet grew from his innovations.

Some of the greatest and most famous of all ballets today were actually created in the nineteenth century. These ballets are called classical ballets because of their lasting quality.

1800's

Petipa (1822-1910)

Choreographers were becoming imaginative and original in designing their ballets. The ballet plots generally had peasant themes, or supernatural ones, or told exotic tales of the Orient or Africa. Marius Petipa was one of these choreographers.

In these ballets, for the first time female dancers assumed a more important role than the male dancers. The best known ballerinas of this period were Maria Taglioni and Carlotta Grisi. Taglioni and Grisi were among the first ballerinas to dance on pointe, on the tips of their toes. This innovation provided new opportunities for ballet expression and technique which are still used today.

The first full-length ballet masterpieces of the nineteenth century were La Sylphide and Giselle. Both are in today's current ballet repertoire. In these ballets, dancers are beautifully made up and costumed, the stage sets and lighting create the illusion of La Sylphide rising to heaven, or of Giselle as she disappears into the grave.

This period of ballet began to decline around 1860. The reasons for this decline had to do with the dances being rigid or created to formula. Thus, even though they were filled with amazing leaps, turns and jumps, they were devoid of real expression or deep feeling.

Among the few ballets to survive the second half of the nineteenth century (1850 on) are: Coppelia (with music by Leo Delibes) and three well-known ballets by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, and The Nutcracker. All were choreographed by Marius Petipa. These flourish today because the composers and choreographers rose above the restrictions that held early nineteenth century ballet too tightly.

1900's

Fokine (1880-1942)

The growth of ballet in the twentieth century was mainly due to the genius of the Russians. Michel Fokine, who graduated from the Imperial Ballet School began to question some of the traditions of Russian ballet at that time. His suggestions for change have become the cornerstones of modern ballet. They are, simply told, these five points:

First, movements for each dance should be created especially for that dance, and should express the meaning and create the mood for the work.

Second, the story of the ballet should unfold naturally, with a perfect blend between dance and music.

Third, that gestures and mime be used to carry the story line of the ballet, growing out of the characters themselves (rather than old cliches such as shaking a fist at heaven to show anger).

Fourth, the corps de ballet and all other dancers who have no solo dances should help the story unfold and become a true part in the ballet.

Fifth, that ballet should be a unity of music, choreography, story, scenery, costumes, and stage effects so as to heighten the content of the ballet.

Diaghilev (1872-1929)

Fokine's superiors objected strongly to his suggestions for ballet reform. In 1909, Fokine joined the Ballets Russes, directed by Sergei Diaghilev, one of ballet's great geniuses. Fokine created many great ballets for this company, such as Scheherazade, The Firebird, Les Sylphides, and Petrouchka.

One of the amazing twentieth century male dancers with the Ballets Russes was Vaslav Nijinsky who was undoubtedly one of the greatest dancers of our time. Nijinsky not only danced, he was also a choreographer who introduced a new freedom into ballet. He is best known for Le Sacre du Printemps ballet which caused a riot of anger by the audience in its first performance in 1913. With this ballet, however, ballet of the twentieth century came to life.

1900's

Twentieth century ballet can be called one of the most popular of the arts. One reason for this growth lies in the person of George Balanchine who was born Gheorghi Balantchivadze in Russia in 1904. After graduating from the Imperial Ballet School, he eventually joined the Diaghilev Ballets Russes where he began his career as a choreographer.

Balanchine (1904-1983)

In 1933, Balanchine came to the United States to organize a ballet school and company. On New Year's Day, 1934, the School of American Ballet opened with 25 students. In 1948, the performing part of the school became the New York City Ballet and quickly moved to the forefront of ballet companies throughout the world.

Balanchine extended the art and technique of ballet by exploring all the ways a dancer's body could perform the basic movements of classical ballet. He also had his dancers perform with a speed and clarity that still astound audiences.

The music to which he choreographed ranged from Bach, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky to Gershwin and electronic music. In his best ballets, the dance and the music are so closely linked that the dancers really dance with the music, instead of just to the music.

From the impact of Balanchine on dance in America, other stars and companies have developed. Some of these are: Jerome Robbins, Robert Joffrey, Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, Dance Theater of Harlem, Twyla Tharp and many others.

Dancers today are part of a tradition that goes back hundreds of years and is as current as the latest, most experimental new ballet created this very day.

SOURCE: Melvin Berger. The World of the Dance. New York: S. G. Phillips, 1978. pp. 93-148.

Appendix B
Resources for Teachers and Students

A. Books:

Thalia Mara. The Language of Ballet: An Informal Dictionary. Cleveland and N.Y.: The World Publishing Company, 1966.

Melvin Berger. The World of Dance. N.Y.: S.G. Phillips, Inc., 1978.

Cynthia Lyle. Dancers on Dancing. N.Y. and London: Drake Publishers, Inc., 1977.

George Balanchine and Francis Mason. Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977.

Sandra Noll Hammond. Ballet Basics. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1974.

Moira Hodgson. Quintet: Five American Dance Companies. N.Y.: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976.

Lynne F. Emery. Black Dance in the U.S. from 1619 to 1970. N.Y.: Dance Horizons, 1980.

Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp. Understanding Ballet. N.Y.: Harmony Books, 1976.

Walter Terry. Ballet Guide. N.Y.: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1982.

Clement Crisp and Mary Clarke. Making a Ballet. N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974.

From the children's book section:

Tobi Tobias. Arthur Mitchell. N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1975.

Bruce Hlibok. Silent Dancer. N.Y.: Wanderer Books, published by Simon and Schuster, 1981.

Ruth Belov Gross. If You Were a Ballet Dancer. N.Y.: Dial Press, 1979.

B. Magazines:

Dance Magazine

Ballet News

C. Ballet Companies in the New York Area:

The Dance Theater of Harlem
466 West 152nd Street
New York, New York 10031

New York City Ballet
New York State Theater
Lincoln Center
New York, New York 10023

American Ballet Theater
890 Broadway
New York, New York 10023

Joffrey Ballet
130 West 56th Street
New York, New York 10019

Elliot Feld Ballet
890 Broadway
New York, New York 10023

D. Dance-related Shops:

Capezio - dance clothing and dance shoes

Freed's of London - dance shoes

The Ballet Shop
1887 Broadway
New York, New York 10023 - dance books, videotapes, photographs and memorabilia

E. Library Trip:

Library of the Performing Arts, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York 10023, is the center for books on dance and its related areas of interest. Call far in advance for an appointment to visit.

F. General Theatrical Supplies:

(The following companies offer a full line of all theatrical supplies, including lights, costumes, make-up, props)

Rubies Costume Co., Inc., One Rubie Plaza, P.O. Box 283, Richmond Hill, NY 11418

American Scenic, 11 Andrews St., Greenville, SC 29602

Appendix C
Articles From ABT Newsletter "On Point"

ABT's Costume Jewels

If you think carrying home a suit from the cleaners or a gallon of detergent from the grocer is a major undertaking, consider the plight of May Ishimoto and Bob Holloway. Every season they "carry home" hundreds of costumes and gallons of detergent. May and Bob are ABT's costume jewels—the dedicated Wardrobe Mistress and Master.

They and their assistants, Florence Aubert and Bruce Horowitz, are responsible for about 1,000 costumes every year. They make sure costumes look as good as they can for as long as possible—and that's no easy task, considering that some costumes date back to 1960!

Bob Holloway is a former dancer who made both his debut and exit from ABT's corps de ballet in 1964. "I always knew I wanted to work with costumes and that's the way I went about doing it!" he quipped. As wardrobe master for the past 17 years, Bob's seen a lot of changes in the Company. "I've kept the same responsibilities but my job has become less hectic in that we no longer crisscross the country doing one-night stands," he said. "Then again, every year we add more ballets—which means more costumes to maintain—so maybe it evens out."

Nineteen eighty-two marks two decades of work in the costume business for May Ishimoto. Before coming to ABT nearly nine years ago, May worked for both the National Ballet of Washington and New York City Ballet. "At City Ballet it was easier because all of the dancers were basically the same size, but I prefer ABT . . . it's my home now."

The two begin their work day mid-morning and finish when the last costumes are in. They spend most of their daytime hours putting away costumes from the previous night and preparing for the upcoming performance. Last minute cleaning, patching and alterations are common, but barring major complications everything runs smoothly when the dancers arrive to be dressed. Minor crises do occur, however, such as the one a few seasons ago when the

May Ishimoto Martha Swope

(Photo credit: Permission pending)

Company mounted its full-length *Sleeping Beauty*. Up until half an hour before curtain time a costume maker assured May that Martine van Hamel's costumes would arrive on time. They did not—so May substituted *La Bayadere* tutus. She then spent Act One on the loading dock in back of the theater painting a tutu blue for the second act. Before long, word spread among the cast that the wardrobe mistress was painting all of ABT's tutus blue.

With several trunks of costumes and accessories to look after, the first item on Bob and May's agenda in each new city is to get the costumes unpacked and aired out. Not every theater ABT plays has the luxury and space of New York's Metropolitan Opera House, and in some, hallways become dressing rooms and tutus line the backstage corridors. Once when the Company played

continued

Chicago the trunks were stored on trams directly above the stage—which made them impossible to reach during a performance.

Although principal dancers have their own costumes for the full-length ballets, most costumes are temporarily altered from season to season or performance to performance to fit the dancers performing the roles. There may be a different dress for a shorter girl and one for a taller girl, such as for the role of Caroline in Anthony Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilacs,* but that is the exception.

Many of ABT's older costumes are as fragile as their age suggests. Some of the materials used are no longer available, such as silk velvet, and each set of costumes has its own particular needs. Certain tutus, such as those used for the *Sylvia* and *Le Corsaire* pas de dux, are particularly intricate with lace, trimmings, sequins and simulated jewels, and cost as much as $2,000 apiece.

"People tend to look at costumes as showpieces but to me they are work clothes," said May, who is nearly always armed with a needle and thread. "All of them are fragile and delicate and have to be handled with that in mind. They have to be reinforced constantly to secure their durability and they must always look fresh."

Costumes aside, May and Bob also deal with a troup of 90 dancers whose moods differ as greatly as the repertoire they dance. It takes a special understanding to deal with the tensions of performing artists minutes away from going on stage. May credits her patience to raising four children of her own. "I try to be there when the dancers need me for whatever reason, and it's my rule that anything that's said in the dressing room stays there. The dancers have nerves like anyone and it shows in different ways but that's all it is . . . nerves."

Why do May and Bob put up with the tensions of performers about to perform, costumes returning from the cleaners in worse shape than they left, and the hectic days of a 10,000-mile tour? Neither one hesitates to give the most basic and sincere reply. "I like it. I like the dancers!"

(Photo Credit: Martha Swope Permission pending)

Last minute adjustments

(Photo credit: Martha Swope Permission pending)

David Bernkopf "calling" a ballet

"On Stage, Please!"

"...Dancers, places please for *Raymonda*...

"...warning follow spots #1 and #2: your first pickup will be center center — #1 you'll get the girl, #2 you'll get the boy. Come up slowly in fifteen counts.

"...curtain warmer out...follow spots stand by...curtain go...15, 14, 13, 12..."

Just before the curtain rises on *Raymonda*, the front of the house is silent. Behind the curtain, however, there's a flurry of activity. The stage manager—issues commands like those above to dozens of technicians who help bring a production off smoothly.

This season ABT has three stage managers: David Bernkopf, who is in his third year with the Company; Pat Ballard, who's in his second; and Mary Ellen Sanchez, assistant stage manager, who's in her first. Although they are relatively new to the Company, the three have many years experience with such groups as the Joffrey, Boston Ballet and the Broadway show *Dancin'*. David came to the field by way of college training and several years with other opera and ballet companies. Mary Ellen, a former dancer with a Spanish dance company, pursued the backstage life and the chance to tour the country. Pat decided to go backstage when, as a performer in a college production, he slipped and fell onstage, and decided he was better off out of the glare of the spotlight. Each of the three is responsible for a portion of ABT's repertoire, but as the season progresses all of them learn the entire repetoire by observing the ballets.

From one hour before a performance begins until the end of the show, the stage belongs to the manager. On a performance day, his or her responsibilities start with ensuring the safety of the dancers. Backstage areas must be clear and the stage itself free of dirt and slick spots. Resin, tissues and water must be available. The stage manager must also account for all Company dancers; those who are performing must be located in the house, and those who are not must fill in a sign-out sheet with their whereabouts in case of emergency or a late program change.

Once a performance begins, the manager remains in constant communication with the dancers and conductor, as well as with production crew members controlling the house lights, stage lights, curtain, sound, scenery and props. Each of the stage manager's precise commands is dictated by the cue book for the ballet, and the only remotely improvisational calls are made during the bows, depending on the responsiveness of the audience.

To David Bernkopf, one of the hardest aspects of the job is to pull off performances smoothly in city after city despite the fact that local crews may never have seen a particular ballet before. "When we come into a new tour city and the house crew has never seen our version of *Swan Lake*," said David, "the challenge is to take them through the show while maintaining our level of excellence."

Although the stage managers strive for perfection with each show, there are nights when the muse of dance herself seems to be playing tricks on them. David can recall a time when a stage manager's nightmare came true; the curtain rose and a principal dancer was nowhere in the theater. Pat recalls a performance of *The Nutcracker* last season during which he set off a flash-pot—the device that triggers an "explosion" on stage—prematurely. "If you miscall a light cue you might sneak the lights back down without anyone noticing, but there was no way to take that error back. I could have killed myself," he said.

On still another occasion, a technical difficulty nearly ruined a performance of *La Bayadere* in Syracuse. It involved the dry ice used in the Act III destruction of the temple.

"We had the dry ice for all performances delivered at one time; I even ordered enough to allow for shrinkage," Pat recalls. "The electricians are supposed to chop it up and place it in a fog machine which directs the steam on stage. But during the last performance, when the time came to load the ice, there wasn't a trace of it, someone had thrown it out. I called the man I'd ordered it from and explained how badly we needed more, and he said he could come by in 45 minutes. I told him we needed it in 18 and he said 'But I live 20 minutes from the theater."

"We held the curtain as long as we could during the intermission, and then we all stood outside in the snow waiting for him. We could hear the cue approaching when he came. We formed a fire brigade, with some of us chopping up the ice and others passing it into the electricians manning the fog machine. Just as the cue light went on, the fog came out.

"The audience never knew how close that scene came to a real disaster!"

"Someone once told me," said David, "that to be a good stage manager you need to have a deity complex and the ability to count backwards!" Apparently, it helps to have Terpsichore on your side as well. □

(Photo credit: Martha Swope Permission pending)

Part of the stage manager's responsibility is to see that the stage is clean and free of slick spots.

A Healthy Role With ABT

One room at ABT's headquarters is quite different than any other. Two massage tables line adjacent walls, a giant jacuzzi occupies one quarter of the room, an assortment of machines resembling stereo tuners are spread out on low tables. As dancers arrive rubbing a knee or clutching a back, it is clear that many come to bolster their spirits besides treat their sprains. This is the physical therapy room—and the office of ABT's physical therapist, Peter Marshall.

By mid-morning daily, the physical therapy room is filled. Peter treats about 20 dancers daily. "Where exactly does it hurt?" he asks a dancer who's sitting on the massage table. She indicates; he applies pressure. After 20 minutes of soaking the injured foot, Peter prescribes a follow-up visit to Dr. William Hamilton, the orthopedist who consults for ABT, confirming diagnoses and treating dancers almost immediately after injury. On to the next dancer in line for treatment. Problem: a strained hamstring and tendon. Solution: a brisk transversal friction massage administered with a lubricant.

Far from the Musak-filled ambiance of a typical doctor's office, ABT's physical therapy room is alive with jokes and banter. Once they leave their battle for perfection behind in the studio, the dancers know just how and where to relax. Most come for repair, but many stop by for a friendly chat, or sometimes to bring a brownie and coffee to the therapist. Peter smiles his thanks—a rare gesture from a man so intent, so serious about his work!

Peter swears by manual therapy, which proved especially helpful one evening in Philadelphia, midway into the first act of *Swan Lake*. Ross Stretton was dancing the role of the Prince when he dislocated his foot and had to leave the stage immediately. Peter rushed to the scene, manipulated the joint back into place, then taped it. The operation was a success. Ross reigned as Prince for the remaining three acts. "I'd take manual therapy and ice any day over machines," said Peter, "but together they're great."

When the dancers become fully acquainted with the machines, Peter allows them to help treat themselves under his supervision. "It's my knee again," said one of the men, positioning himself alongside an ultrasound machine. Constantly on the run, Peter speeds from a problem knee to a foot injury and then to his office telephone, which rings perpetually. No wonder ABT's physical therapist always seems out of breath!

"Sometimes it's draining because time is so short," said Peter. "I would like to have more time to spend with each dancer." As it is, if he can't give a dancer sufficient time, he extends his work hours or sees them the next day.

Dancers were not always Peter's specialty. As an advisor to Adidas' National Track and Field team, and in his own private practice, he specialized in treating world-class runners. When his dance clientele began to increase, he took on the challenge with enthusiasm. "Since a dancer's range of movements is more diverse than a runner's, their injuries are more complicated." Peter felt he had much to learn. He spent hours observing dancers in class, and working under New York City Ballet Physical Therapist Marika Molnar. In the summer of 1983, Peter was hired as full-time physical therapist at Ballet Theatre. Soon after, Roy Jacuzzi donated to the Company a whirlpool, and Trustee Patricia Hagan underwrote its installation. It has seldom been empty in the last 12 months. Biostim Inc. contributed electrical stimulators for nerves and muscles, and Medtronic donated a neuromuscular stimulator as well.

Peter has designed a two-fold program that includes both immediate treatment and preventive care. With a company the size of Ballet Theatre, his job is massive. First, dancers' injuries require immediate treatment to ensure a quick return to class. Second, long-term preventive care is necessary to reduce the incidence of injury. Installing stretch boards in many of the studios was a step in the preventive direction. A triangular wedge of wood that fits snugly against the wall, the stretch board, if used frequently, helps cut down the incidence of Achilles' tendonitis, the most common over-use injury among ballet dancers.

Sometimes dancers request individual preventive programs. Peter then recommends an appropriate exercise regimen or activity. If a swimming program is called for, he may suggest the use of one stroke and avoidance of another. At the finish of the program, positive results are almost always evident.

"I enjoy working with the dancers. More than professional athletes, they are extremely conscientious about doing exercise and sticking to a program I work out for them," he said.

From the sound of things, there's no going back to the old life for Peter Marshall. Keeping bodies well-tuned, healing bruises, bolstering spirits—all are his unique role at Ballet Theatre. □

Of Dancers And Astronauts

Twelve years ago, Dr. William Hamilton specialized in sports medicine and treated only a few dancers. Then George Balanchine, interested in starting an orthopedic program at New York City Ballet, hired Dr. Hamilton. Now he consults with ABT as well.

From the beginning, Dr. Hamilton found the dual nature of his work a challenge. Initially, the dancer's injury must be treated. Next, the doctor must question why the injury happened to that particular dancer, and what can be done to prevent it from recurring. Injuries can be caused by a fault in technique, an unrecognized weakness that can be corrected by a special exercise program, or sometimes just bad luck. "For me, the why is always interesting," said the doctor.

While some problems are common to all dance companies, Dr. Hamilton finds that ABT dancers have some problems unlike those of City Ballet. The major difference is choreography.

"In Balanchine's choreography, for example, a grand jete often will be followed by another combination step," he said. "Whereas in the bravura technique that ABT performs, a dancer will often do a grand jete that lands in a balance. This requires tremendous deceleration, which in turn can cause stress fractures. At City Ballet, tendonitis of the feet is common because of all the rapid foot work."

Touring can account for problems in terms of the varying hardness of stages and the additional stress on dancers away from home for long periods.

The School of American Ballet, a source for many ABT dancers, is also under Dr. Hamilton's wing. "At SAB, a whole set of problems exist among the young dancers relating to the age of their skeleton correlated with the stage in their ballet training. Often that provides insight into problems they may have later." Dr. Hamilton is fascinated with the training and selection process that goes on at SAB auditions, and loves to watch the Russian *grands dames* in action. Eventually, the astute eyes of the connoisseur weed out the imperfect: feet not good, no turn-out, wrong body type. "Underneath all this is tremendous Darwinism. I think only astronauts are a more selected group of people than ballet dancers."

For the dancers, Dr. Hamilton's door is rarely closed; office hours are structured to allow them easy access. "Monday morning we keep our outside appointments light—there are always the walking wounded after the weekend." Personable and dedicated, Dr. Hamilton does not confine his consultations to the office. He may appear in the wings on performance nights, available for a quick follow-up on a sore shoulder, or small injuries that may become serious if left unattended. "There's something about being around," said the doctor. "If it's just beginning to hurt and you happen to be standing there, a dancer will often say, 'Gee, doctor, can you have a look?'" □

—Beatrice Hamblett

On Point, Vol. 4, No. 1
Winter 1985

Gil Boggs

World champion wrestler Bruno Samartino breathes easier these days. Gil Boggs decided not to make wrestling a career.

Even so, the time Gil spent as a high school athlete is helping him in the career he chose. Especially the minutes—that seemed like days—he spent on the wrestling mat.

"People say dancers are in better shape than athletes," Gil said during a brief rehearsal break. "But wrestling is the only thing I've ever found that was harder than dancing. You're in there for six minutes—and you're worn out after two. When it's over you find yourself dazed, like you do at the end of a full-length ballet.

"It taught me about getting to where it hurts so bad you want to quit, and then putting yourself into four-wheel drive and getting past that point."

In ballet as in wrestling, that's called stamina—and ever since Gil began playing varsity football ("You get hurt in the knees a couple of times and you begin to wonder") he's been developing it.

It's paying off in such roles as *La Bayadere*'s Bronze Idol and especially in the *pas de trois* in *Les Rendezvous*. "I never jumped so much in such a 'little' way as in *Rendezvous*," said Gil. "In Bronze Idol you jump as high as you can, as big as you can. In *Rendezvous* it's barely off the floor...and it's so fast. It's almost five minutes of jumping, changing direction and jumping some more. It all happens from the knees down. In my debut (with Deirdre Carberry and David Moore) my calves were cramping—it was something else. But everyone was in the wings urging us on!"

Gil Boggs was born in Pensacola, Florida but calls Atlanta home. He started dancing when he was ten. After studying for eight years he earned a contract with the Atlanta Ballet. He worked his way up to principal rank, and danced the part of the Nutcracker Prince in the Tchaikovsky-Petipa classic.

In 1982 he took a class in Los Angeles with ABT, where he remembers feeling intimidated by the principal dancers in the studio with him. The class was much faster than he was used to, but he managed. He'd already been offered a position with Jiri Kylian's Netherlands Dance Theatre, but he was used to a classical and neo-classical repertoire. So when he was offered a contract by ABT, he joined the Company on April 19—the day after his contract with Atlanta expired and the opening day of ABT's Met season.

With the opening of the 1983 Met season, Gil completed his "rookie" year. Finally, he observed, something at ABT will be familiar. Now Gil's intent on applying what he learned to do onstage during the tour to all his performances.

"It's more than going out and performing. It's what it takes to go out time after time and pull a show off. I never realized how difficult that is. It's easy for anybody to walk out on stage and do it; sometimes it works and sometimes not. To find the ability to make it work each time is what I need to learn—making the *jetes* look like they're supposed to and the *pirouettes* consistent.

"I love being on stage but I don't always communicate that," Gil said, alluding to his new role—the *Fille Mal Gardee* pas de deux. "With my *Filles* Misha kept saying, 'Relax! Smile. You're supposed to be a peasant—just let go and do it.' But I would get so uptight that I would be afraid to let go, because I might not like what would come out or I might end up on the floor or in the pit.

"That's why you have to get it right in rehearsal—so you can go out there knowing you can do it right. I have to find how to let myself go, and trust my inner feelings that it's going to look pleasing."

There's one more thing Gil will have to deal with—and soon. He's a rabid fan of the Atlanta Braves, and has been known to watch doubleheaders on T.V. on Sunday afternoons, which is fine except that one Joyce Freeman is not a rabid fan, and on July 29th of this year she will become Mrs. Gil Boggs, at which time Gil's East Side apartment may no longer be the home of the Braves. ■

Few people speak of baseball and ballet in the same breath; but to some, the acrobatic skill of St. Louis Cardinal shortstop Ozzie Smith does bring to mind the acrobatic artistry of an ABT dancer...and that led to soloist Gil Boggs' appearance on the nationally syndicated weekly television show, "This Week in Baseball," hosted by Mel Allen. A production crew from the program videotaped Gil at ABT's headquarters in New York City last October, and within 10 days of shooting, the piece was aired.

Pamela Parker, Art Director for Major League Baseball Productions, told *On Point*, "We really wanted to do a piece that specifically correlated the movements—the grace, power and finesse—of a dancer with those of a ballplayer. It was easier to accomplish than we thought it would be." One reason is that Gil Boggs is an avid baseball fan, and an Atlanta Braves rooter.

"They brought in videotapes of Ozzie's movements on the field," Gil said, "but rather than have me duplicate them, they wanted to compare his grace on the field with a dancer's in the studio. I was just putting things together, double *tours, a la seconde* turns, cabrioles, barrel turns—the more exciting steps. The lack of music made it kind of hard; it was strange doing all that in silence." When the tape aired, though, it had music—the "Waltz of the Flowers" from *The Nutcracker*. As Mel Allen would say, "How 'bout that!" □

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and
Vol. 9, No. 2
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If the Shoe Fits

Remember when starting the school year meant buying a new pair of shoes? When ABT starts a new season, it means buying *180* pairs of new shoes—*for each female dancer!*

Why so many? Because women's shoes may last only one performance.

Each year, Ballet Theatre spends almost $300,000 on shoes and tights. But more than the strain on the budget, consider the strain on the performers. They have to fit, break in and wear all those shoes. "And they are *very* picky about their shoes," observed the man who orders shoes for the dancers, Leopold Allen.

What is the proper shoe?

For the women, finding the right pointe shoe means more than walking into a store and asking for her size. Capezio, Inc. of New York and Frederick Freed of London, two of the most popular maufacturers, produce a variety of stock shoes, but different types of feet require different types of shoes. A flat instep, for example, is strong and easy to service, whereas a large instep, although highly prized and lovely to look at, is not easy to fit because of the height of the arch. The solution is custom tailored shoes; the companies handle special orders to ensure a comfortable fit.

Shoemakers adjust shoes in various ways. They make shanks in different strengths to accommodate various arches. They can widen toes, narrow heels or vice versa. They can raise or lower the back of the shoe in proportion to the dancer's heel. And they can lengthen or shorten the vamp—the front of the shoe—depending on the length of the dancer's toes. Maria Tallchief is among those who have had to have special shoes, recalls Gage Bush Englund, a Ballet Theatre Trustee and former ABT dancer. "Maria had very short toes, so she ordered her shoes with a lower vamp," she said. Today, all of ABT's dancers order specials—except Gabrielle Brown. "I don't need anything; I just put them on and they feel great," she said. "She makes my life easy," said Leopold Allen.

In addition to special orders, dancers often request shoes from a particular cobbler. The makers sew pointe shoes over their hands and label the shoes with their initial. A different size hand results in a different fit, so if dancers find a shoe that feels great, they make note of the maker for their next order. When the maker retires, they have to find a new one. "When Mr. Y retired, it threw everyone off," said Harriet Clark. "A lot of people wore Y's."

Breaking In

Breaking in pointe shoes is truly an art in itself, and it's not uncommon to have to break in three pairs of shoes for one night. The toe of the shoe, called the box, consists of layers of materials held together with glue, making it very stiff at first. Dancers often rap the toes against the floor to soften them up a bit. Alina Hernandez hammers the box to eliminate noise. "If you're the only one on stage, you don't want to sound like a horse," she said. Gage Englund used to stomp on hers, and recalls still another method. "One girl I used to share the dressing room with would put her shoes in the crack of the door and then slam the door on them. And the whole time she'd be yelling, 'Die! Die!'"

Sometimes dancers will bend the shoe in half to soften the arch. These rituals are but one step on the road to comfort. Taping toes and covering them with lambswool is routine. Wearing Dr. Scholl's foam caps is also common; they guard against bruising and muscle strain. When a dancer bruises a toenail, it can take up to six weeks to heal. They therefore spend lots of time cutting and filing them to eliminate unnecessary pressure

Shoes wear out rapidly. In a performance of *Swan Lake*, the Swan Queen may go through two or three pairs of shoes, and corps dancers usually go through one pair of shoes per performance. Alina said perspiration causes the shoes to "get mushy." Elizabeth Carr said her naturally high arch causes the shank to break easily. For Anna Spelman, the box at the front of the shoe seems to wear out first. Although their shoes break in different places, they all employ the same techniques to prevent and repair breakage. Most of the women swear by Fabulon, a floor wax product they apply to the box or shank to strengthen it again. That enables them to wear their shoes for one or two more rehearsals. They also spray shellac on them. Aside from the time a guest principal mistook the shellac for hairspray, it remains a valuable tool in lengthening the life of a shoe. Leopold said ABT spends about $700 a year on such makeshift shoe care products. "I order Fabulon by the gallon," he said, "and spray shellac by the case."

Dancers occasionally ask more of their shoes than just a good fit. Christine Spizzo recalls a story that Alexandra Danilova told her about her Ballet Russes days.

"They had been rehearsing all day and late into the night," related Chris. "The dancers were exhausted, and Mme. Danilova was especially exasperated. Nothing was going right. Finally, she took off her shoes, threw them to the floor and, stomping off defiantly, said 'Let *them* do it!'"

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John Mannix